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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/002,521	11/01/2001	Timothy Samuel Girton	760-35 CIP	6660

7590 04/17/2003

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EXAMINER

MILLER, CHERYL L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3738	8

DATE MAILED: 04/17/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/002,521	GIRTON ET AL. <i>MF</i>
Examiner	Art Unit	
Cheryl Miller	3738	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 January 2003.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4 and 11-16 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 4 and 11-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on 28 January 2003 is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed January 28, 2003 with respect to the rejection of claims 1 and 3 over Mitchell (WO/87/02996) have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 1 and 3 over Mitchell has been withdrawn. Applicant's arguments filed January 28, 2003 with respect to the rejection of claims 1 and 3 over Zilla (WO/00/30564) have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant claims "a tubular extrudate comprising a PTFE matrix". Applicant argues that the Zilla reference discloses a polyurethane tube. Zilla discloses a tubular extrudate comprising polyurethane, which may also *comprise PTFE*. Therefore, the reference still reads on the claims. Applicant also argues that the Zilla reference comprises only PTFE non-extractable fibers, however the applicant has not claimed any shapes or makeup of the PTFE matrix. The rejection still stands and is believed to be adequately described below.

Priority

An application in which the benefits of an earlier application are desired must contain a specific reference to the prior application(s) in the first sentence of the specification or in an application data sheet (37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) and (a)(5)).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 recites the limitation "said tubular structure" in line 5. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. It is suggested to change "said tubular structure" to recite --said tubular extrudate--. Claim 2 depends upon claim 1 and inherits all problems associated with the parent claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Zilla et al. (WO/ 00/30564, cited by applicant in IDS). Zilla discloses a medical device or vascular graft (pg.4, lines 12-13) comprising a tubular extrudate (pg.11, lines 1-5) comprising a PTFE matrix (pg.5, lines 9-17; pg.9, lines 5-6; pg.11, lines 6-7) having domains of an extractable polymeric material (pg.4, lines 3-4; pg.6, lines 21-23; pg.9, lines 25-31), wherein subjecting the extrudate is exposed to a dissolving medium or degrading temperature to extract a portion of the polymer, forming pores (pg.6, lines 21-23; pg.9, lines 29-31).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zilla in view of in view of Dereume et al. (UPSN 5,639,278, cited in previous office action). Zilla discloses a medical device (pg.4, lines 12-13) comprising a tubular extrudate, commonly known as a graft (pg.11, lines 1-5) comprising a PTFE matrix (pg.5, lines 15-17) having domains of an extractable polymeric material (pg.4, lines 3-4). Zilla does not teach however, a stent combined with a graft. Dereume teaches combining an axially positioned stent (22) combined with a graft (23 or 24), in order to provide increased support by the stent, enhanced tissue ingrowth by the graft, and means to cover an aneurysm in an artery or vein (col.2, line 64-col.3, line 4; col.3, lines 20-30). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Dereume's teaching of combining a stent with a graft, with Mitchell's type of extruded graft made of porous PTFE, in order to provide an endoprosthesis that supports an artery or vein, covers an aneurysm, enhances tissue ingrowth, etc. enhancing the overall biocompatibility of the prosthesis.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Art Unit: 3738

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cheryl Miller whose telephone number is (703) 305-2812. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 5:00pm.

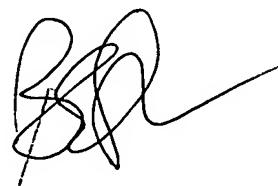
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott, can be reached on (703) 308-2111. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-3590.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0858.



Cheryl Miller

April 9, 2003

BRUCE SNOW
PRIMARY EXAMINER